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ABSTRACT

Follow Through is a federally funded program to continue the successful educational progress made by children in Head Start and similar preschool programs. This program emphasizes not only special instructional approaches for children of low income families, but also the provision of needed medical, dental, social, psychological, and nutritional services. Active parental involvement is encouraged. This pamphlet examines the program, its success and impact in four Florida counties: Hillsborough (Tampa), Duval (Jacksonville), Dade (Miami), and Okaloosa (Fort Walton Beach). (JD)

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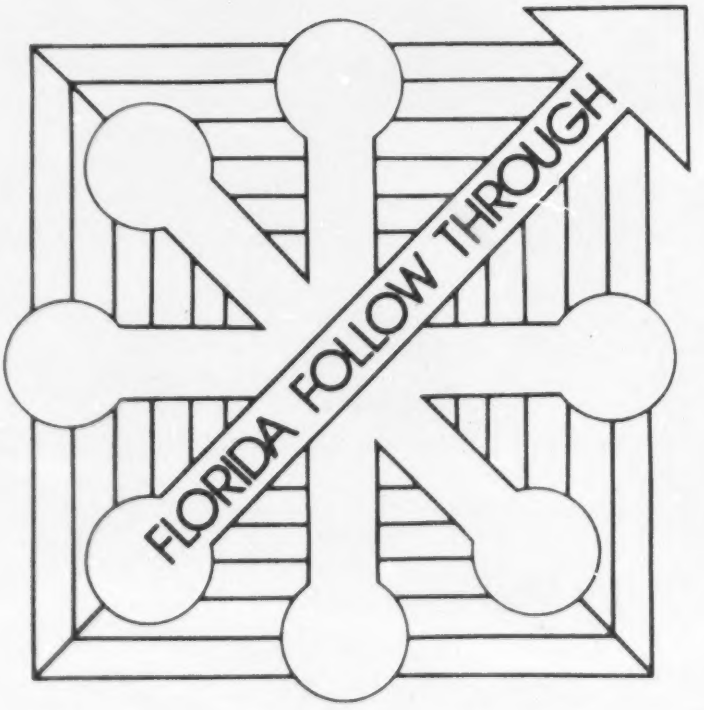


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## WHAT IS FOLLOW THROUGH?

Follow Through is a federally funded program, established in 1967, to continue the successful educational progress made by children in Head Start and similar preschool programs. The program was designed after experience showed that gains made by these children from low income families faded when they entered regular school systems

Follow Through emphasizes special instructional approaches and provides necessary medical, dental, social, psychological and nutritional services to eligible children. Meaningful involvement of their parents and career development of Follow Through staff members are integral parts of the Follow Through design

Follow Through projects begin serving children in kindergarten or first grade and extend through their third year in school. Follow Through is just what its name applies – a "following through" of Head Start children from kindergarten through grade three. Some 80,000 children from families with poverty-level incomes now attend classes at 160 Follow Through projects in the United States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico

## WHAT ARE THE SPECIAL FEATURES OF FOLLOW THROUGH?

Follow Through has maintained such major features of the Head Start program as comprehensive services, use of school and neighborhood resources, parent participation, staff development, an advisory committee composed of at least 50% parents of Follow Through children, and employment opportunities for low income family members as aides or other school workers.

Follow Through expands the Head Start concept to include a research and development design, focused on instruction, which follows Head Start children into the elementary school. The intent of the program is to compensate for early deprivation of many children from low income families. Its major goal is to improve the life chances of low income children by providing services which are intended to supplement not to supplant existing school programs.

All Follow Through projects share four major goals:

To promote learning in disadvantaged children through the use of specific approaches designed to meet their needs;

To become involved with the whole child by providing medical, dental, nutritional, psychological and social services not ordinarily available to these children;

To involve the parents of disadvantaged children in their children's learning by providing opportunities to participate in classrooms and to make decisions related to the Follow Through program;

To foster better classroom environments by offering career opportunities and staff development programs for the teachers, paraprofessionals and aides in Follow Through classrooms.

At each project the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) plays a significant role and has an active voice in program planning and development, recruitment, establishing criteria for staff selection and other policy making functions at all Follow Through projects. The work of the PAC makes it possible for each program to be responsive to the expressed needs and interests of the parents, children and the community it serves

## HOW IS FOLLOW THROUGH FUNDED?

Follow Through funds are provided to local school systems under the Economic Opportunity Act and the program is administered nationally by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, U.S. Office of Education. Through grants awarded to State Departments of Education technical assistance is provided to projects and joint efforts are coordinated. Additional grants have been awarded to 29 colleges, universities and other research centers ("model sponsors") for the development of varying instructional approaches. Approximately 20 program models ("planned variations") designed by these model sponsors are being tried. Their curricular approaches range from highly-structured, academically oriented models to developmental, child-centered programs. Several models are based on parent education. Follow Through communities receive direct and continuing assistance from the program sponsor as they develop and carry out the approach they have selected. While Follow Through programs now in operation may follow different models, all work within the same guidelines.

Because classroom problems are often related to factors outside the school, federal funds provide for supportive services which include those of doctors, dentists and parent education specialists as well as extra instructional staff, equipment and materials used in the classrooms. Such comprehensive services are continued at least during the first three years of school. The funds also make possible the continuous training of teachers and aides in the program and enable program staffs to coordinate community resources to meet the needs of low income families. Follow Through personnel help parents make contact with local, state and Follow Through services available for their children.

## WHERE ARE FLORIDA'S FOLLOW THROUGH PROJECTS?

Florida has four officially designated, federally funded Follow Through programs at this time—Dade County (Miami), Duval County (Jacksonville), Hillsborough County (Tampa) and Okaloosa County (Fort Walton Beach).

In 1968 three of these projects chose a "planned variation" to learning and implemented an instructional program designed by a model sponsor. Okaloosa County selected a curriculum model in which children work individually or in small groups and learn by doing, experimenting, exploring and discussing. This is the Cognitively Oriented Curriculum Model designed by Dr. David Weikart of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Duval and Hillsborough counties selected the Parent Education Model designed by Dr. Ira Gordon of the University of Florida. In this model, parents are involved in their children's education both in the classroom and in the home. Parent educators (often program-trained parents) work in the classroom as aides and visit in the homes once each week, furnishing mothers with educational tasks to be completed with their Follow Through Children.

Dade County elected to remain individually sponsored. Its instructional program stresses individualized and small group instruction. The project uses a systems analysis approach to identify and prescribe for individual needs of children.

## HOW ARE THE VARIOUS APPROACHES EVALUATED?

Follow Through is a research and development effort designed to assess the effectiveness of innovative program approaches in a variety of settings. By bringing these varied approaches to learning into immediate classroom use, under the sponsorship of the universities and research laboratories in which they originated, the time lag which often occurs between research and its application is eliminated.

A national, longitudinal evaluation is being carried out by Stanford Research Institute (SRI) to determine which parts of the various models appear to be most successful. The SRI study will compare student, teacher and parent growth as well as institutional change among programs and assess the results of the same program in different environments. Each of the ten models participating in SRI's study is operating in at least five project locations.

Continuous informal and diagnostic evaluation is conducted by classroom teams within each project. To modify ongoing programs, model sponsors evaluate their own approaches. Additional evaluation is carried out by program specialists associated with Social Dynamics, Inc., a national consulting firm under contract to the National Office. Information gained from all of these sources should benefit early childhood education in general and the education of disadvantaged children in particular.

## FOLLOWING THROUGH ON FOLLOW THROUGH

Other schools and communities are using Follow Through ideas on a more limited basis. Some have used Title I, Title III and funds from other sources to develop individual approaches to instruction and to provide supplementary services to children.

There appears to be a growing conviction among educators that learning is affected substantially not only by instructional problems, but also by medical, dental, social, nutritional and psychological factors. These educators feel that schools and communities must assume responsibility for meeting the varied needs of young children.

**THIS IS FOLLOW THROUGH!**

## FOLLOW THROUGH IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY (TAMPA) FLORIDA

### INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

Tampa's Follow Through project also adopted Dr. Ira Gordon's Florida Parent Education Model as their "planned variation" to learning. Staff members focus upon breaking the poverty cycle by directly involving the parent, who then carries out prescribed educational activities with his child at home. As in Jacksonville, two parent educators assist in each classroom and visit with parents of Follow Through children in their homes.

Consultants from the model sponsor meet with the teachers and parent educators twice a month in classrooms and at inservice sessions. These meetings help insure effective implementation of the Parent Education Model. The Follow Through Project Director meets weekly with principals of Follow Through schools and maintains open communication among all Follow Through and related personnel.

Although the model's emphasis is on working with Follow Through parents in the home setting, the Hillsborough County Follow Through project assumes responsibility for children's progress in primary classrooms. Teaching teams in the classrooms are assisted by curriculum specialists in the areas of language arts, reading, science, math and perceptual motor skills. In cooperation with the curriculum coordinator these specialists organize and carry out effective preservice and inservice sessions in curriculum related areas.

The classroom settings in Hillsborough's Follow Through include both self-contained classrooms and pod-organized, open education environments. Follow Through children's experiences are expanded beyond the limitations of their living environments through the use of various community and cultural resources.

### SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICES

**Nutritional**– Daily breakfasts and hot lunches are provided for each Follow Through child. The children are also introduced to good eating habits, acceptable mealtime behaviors and a knowledge and taste of new foods.

**Medical**– The combined services of a Follow Through staff nurse, health aides and other related personnel provide for the correction of physical and dental defects. The Follow Through nurse conducts a training program for teachers, parents and children aimed toward prevention of health problems.

**Social**– Working with individual children who have difficulty adjusting to their school experiences is the primary responsibility of the Hillsborough County Follow Through social worker. Home visits involve the children's parents and help them understand their child's needs and school problems. The social worker also works closely with the community worker and other community agencies to utilize local resources for solving problems.

**Career Development**– By supplying tuition, textbooks and transportation expenses the Career Opportunities Program (COP) has made it possible for parent educators to pursue college training.

## SUCCESSFUL PARENT INVOLVEMENT

In Hillsborough County, successful parent involvement has been built by keeping all parents informed about parent activities and encouraging them to participate in Follow Through Mini-PACs. The community worker cooperates with the PAC Chairman to encourage parent participation in activities provided through the combined resources of the school, the family and the community.

Parent activities made available by the Hillsborough County Follow Through project and the PAC include:

learning to sew for their families using project sewing machines;

joining a carpentry group;

improving parental skills in producing low cost, nutritional meals by attending cooking classes;

using the reducing bicycle or reducing machine, hair dryer and other equipment provided especially for parents;

receiving help in continuing their education;

participating in other parent activities—picnics, tasting parties, breakfasts, etc.;

attending parent meetings on child care and development;

helping with fund raising activities;

joining a class in auto mechanics;

volunteering in Follow Through classrooms;

becoming a Parent Educator.

## FOLLOW THROUGH IN DUVAL COUNTY (JACKSONVILLE), FLORIDA

### INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

The Parent Education Model sponsored by Dr. Ira Gordon of the University of Florida is followed by the staff members at this project.

The teaching team in each of the classrooms includes one teacher and two parent educators. Parent educators (often parents from the Follow Through community) work half-time as educators of parents, taking individually prescribed learning tasks into the home. They are trained by the model sponsor to work with an adult in the child's home. On weekly visits, they demonstrate learning activities which are later completed by mother and child at home.

The selection and development of specific "tasks" are based upon five recognized cognitive processes--classification, number, causality, time and space. These activities encourage adults at home to take more active interest in the child's performance at school and to motivate him toward greater academic progress. The parent educators also provide effective liaison between the home and the school.

A project specialist is responsible for the evaluation of the learning approach a part of the ongoing research effort. These specialists also conduct frequent inservice sessions for Follow Through staff members.

The regular Duval County curriculum and curricular materials are used in Duval County Follow Through classrooms. Additional enrichment materials are provided with Follow Through funds.

Based on the concept that a child learns best when the greatest number of his senses are called upon, the program uses both teacher-made and commercially prepared multi-media kits, tasks and activities. Visual perception is taught through the use of transparencies, pictures, charts, games, puppets and other visual aids. Auditory perception and discrimination are taught with listening centers, record players, tape recorders and musical instruments. Directionality, articulation, eye-hand coordination and spatial relationships are skills taught as tools of thinking and reasoning.

Four team leaders serve as helping and demonstrating teachers in the classrooms and participate in daily planning sessions with Follow Through teachers, parent educators and school principals.

### SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICES

**Medical**--Pediatricians from the community come to Follow Through schools to carry out initial medical screening and physical examinations of eligible Follow Through children. Nurses work with the pediatricians, keep appropriate records and are on duty to help with children's health problems which occur at school.

**Social**--The Duval County Follow Through project employs two social workers who respond to referrals submitted by teachers, parent educators, parents or nurses. Primary areas of concern include children's visits to doctors after initial screenings, investigation into causes of some children's poor attendance, and working with parents. The social worker encourages families to utilize the services of community agencies in such areas as clothing and housing.

**Psychological**- The Follow Through project psychologist is available to observe individual children in classrooms as requested. Such observations may be followed by individual testing and/or Follow Through staff and parent conferences. Guidance is provided after completion of individual observations and background study of children referred.

## SUCCESSFUL PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) in the Duval County Follow Through project is composed of representatives from mini-PACs, which are smaller PACs at each school. The city-wide PAC chairman conducts PAC meetings at which all of the Follow Through schools, as well as community organizations, are represented. This allows more effective parent involvement and gives more parents a voice in Follow Through activities.

The project's parent worker also encourages parents to become active in such Follow Through activities as:

participating in parent field trips;

attending arts and crafts classes;

receiving help in furthering their education by enrolling in adult classes offered in the Jacksonville community;

attending group meetings to learn such skills as shoe repair, upholstering, making new clothes from old garments, filling out income tax forms, etc.

shaping the content of future meetings by expressing their interests;

attending parent group meetings at Follow Through schools;

volunteering in Follow Through classrooms.

## FOLLOW THROUGH IN DADE COUNTY (MIAMI) FLORIDA

### INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

Dade County chose to remain independently sponsored when Follow Through projects were presented with the opportunity to select one of the "planned variation" approaches offered by Model Sponsors. It has built its curriculum to be responsive to the individual needs of the children involved. Planning and implementation of the project is a group effort which solicits input from central staff members, parents principals and teachers.

The Follow Through staff has found its Systems Analysis approach to be a very effective method of individualizing instruction. Using this approach, a complete compilation of behavioral objectives, assessment items and activities to be incorporated into the curriculum were identified. At the start of each school year, a diagnostic testing program is administered to each child, furnishing information to each classroom team (teacher, teacher assistant and aide) for use in curriculum planning and prescribing educational activities for that child.

In reading, key sort materials are used for work with individual children. Additionally, as part of the curriculum design, feedback on each child's progress is furnished to Follow Through teachers every six weeks. This makes it possible to plan effectively and to meet individual needs.

Teachers' skills are consistently updated through inservice training and video tape recordings. The Inservice Coordinator works in classrooms and in special sessions to guide these activities.

As in the other Florida Follow Through projects, teaching assitants and aides have furthered their education through the Career Opportunities Program and the Supplementary Training Program.

### SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICES

A Systems Analysis approach is used in all of the Follow Through components as well as in the instructional program.

**Health** - One of the major offerings of the Follow Through program is health treatment and care, with examination and prevention of problems an integral part of the program for every Follow Through child. A full-time nurse, a full time bilingual pediatrician and volunteer parent helpers enable Dade County Follow Through to operate its own school health clinics. Two local dentists are hired expressly for Follow Through by Dade County Health Department. Follow Through also offers a free breakfast and Dade County schools provide a free hot lunch to eligible children.

**Guidance** - Through consultations with teachers, parents and other personnel, the Follow Through Guidance Counselor uses a case conference approach to develop and coordinate individualized plans which bring all Follow Through services to each child. A series of inservice workshops for Follow Through staff members is provided to promote classroom use of good guidance techniques and principles.

**Social** - Through direct, personal contacts, a social worker and two parent social worker assistants provide liaison between the school and home and between the home and community agencies. Accurate biographic and economic data records are kept for each Follow Through family; community agencies and organizations who might contribute in-kind funds, materials or services to Follow Through are contacted; coordinating services between the health and parent involvement components are provided.

## SUCCESSFUL PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Working with the parent coordinator and two parent social worker assistants, the Dade County Follow Through PAC chairman plays an active role in promoting parent activities and parent involvement. Various PAC subcommittees advise Follow Through staff members of parental concerns and contribute to more effective Follow Through programming.

Some of the successful parent activities include:

joining English as a second language classes;

receiving clerical and office training;

obtaining help in continuing their education;

participating in field trips for parents (Lion Country Safari, vegetable picking, Youth Fair, etc.);

being part of Family Life Service discussion groups which are held in parents homes. These sessions are conducted both in Spanish and English;

Using the Resource Center to check out books and other materials to help their children at home;

volunteering in Follow Through classrooms.

## FOLLOW THROUGH IN OKALOOSA COUNTY (FORT WALTON BEACH), FLORIDA

### INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

The Cognitively Oriented Curriculum Model developed by Dr. David Weikart is used in Fort Walton Beach.

Follow Through classrooms are located in three elementary schools – Oakland Heights, Fort Walton and Mary Esther. A certified teacher, a paraprofessional and an aide make up each classroom team. Uninterrupted planning time is furnished for a half-day period every sixth school day. While a release team assumes classroom activities, classroom teams plan with a teacher designated as Follow Through Curriculum Assistant. During regular school days, the aide spends each afternoon making home visits to demonstrate learning activities to parents. This phase of the aides' work is guided by the Home Teaching Coordinator.

The active involvement of children in their own learning reflects the belief of the Okaloosa Follow Through staff that learning takes place through doing, exploring, manipulating, experimenting and relating. Verbal interaction among students is encouraged. Teachers interact with their students in discussions to encourage thoughtful speculation and to discourage rote answers.

The Cognitively Oriented Curriculum is based on four areas believed to be essential to all mental growth – classification, seriation, time and space. Learning tasks are carefully sequenced to develop specific kinds of thought processes in each of these areas.

Cognitive tasks are provided for individual children and small groups rather than for total class instruction. Commercial materials used are compatible with the cognitive focus of the program.

Frequent inservice sessions enable teachers, paraprofessionals and aides to carry out curricular goals effectively. Okaloosa's Follow Through staff creates classroom environments which promote the development of self direction, discovery and problem-solving. Pupil-teacher planning in which the child makes a plan, carries it out and evaluates at the end of a time block is part of their K-3 program.

### SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICES

**Social**– The Follow Through social worker works directly with Follow Through families in the community to acquaint them with available Follow Through and community services. She also works in the Parent House, a separate building on school property, which serves as a center for parent activities. In addition to helping parents learn to sew, type and engage in creative art activities, she is responsible for taking initial applications, arranging bus transportation and checking on attendance.

**Health**– The Follow Through nurse works with Follow Through medical and dental personnel and with the Okaloosa County Health Department. She conducts all preliminary health checks and accompanies children to the doctor, dentist or optometrist as needed. Follow-up work with parents in home treatment of health problems and to establish sound hygiene and health practices is also part of her work.

**Psychological**– The Psychologist is a member of the team made up of Project Director, Nurse, Social Worker and Secretarial Assistants. He also works with the Principal, curriculum coordinators and teachers. The Nurse and Social Worker often work directly with the Psychologist in testing children and in consultation about medical, family and psychological matters which influence a child's classroom progress. The psychologist's role is both professional and advisory, extending his influence throughout the chain of home-school-community and classroom.

## SUCCESSFUL PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) in Okaloosa County, under the leadership of the PAC chairman, plays an active role in the Follow Through program. Representatives from all three of the Follow Through schools serve on PAC committees (nutrition, career opportunities, curriculum, medical and dental) which make recommendations for program improvement. PAC meetings are held at least once a month and are attended by parents and representatives of community organizations.

A Home Teaching (and Parent) Coordinator works with the PAC and assumes responsibility for keeping parents informed about and participating in such activities as:

furthering their education through adult high school and adult business education classes;

learning more about home management in classes for adults at Okaloosa-Walton Junior College;

joining sewing, cooking and needlecraft activities for adults and children at the Follow Through Parent House;

increasing reading comprehension;

finding out about Follow Through Child Care Services for under-school-age children;

joining community organizations such as the Emergency School Committee, Fort Walton Civic League, Progressive Community Improvement Organization and others;

visiting and volunteering in Follow Through classrooms;

attending parent group meetings at Follow Through schools;

visiting the Follow Through Parent House which is open daily.